Unit-II

Methods of research: Observation, Survey [Interview, Questionnaires], Experimental, Quasi-experimental, Field studies, Cross-Cultural Studies, Phenomenology, Grounded theory, Focus groups, Narratives, Case studies, Ethnography

1. Cross Cultural Studies

Cross-cultural studies involve the systematic comparisons of different cultures that aim to understand variations of human behaviour as it is influenced by cultural context. Cross-cultural studies share methodological similarities as any other scientific research study. However, a specific methodological parameter that differentiates cross-cultural studies from other research studies is the sample; specifically, the participation of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In effect, this methodological distinction reveals the philosophy that cross-cultural studies bring to scientific research.

2. Phenomenology

Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Typically, interviews are conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. The interview(s) attempts to answer two broad questions (Moustakas, 1994): What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situation have typically influenced your experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013)?

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3. Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is introduced as an inductive, comparative methodology that provides systematic guidelines for gathering, synthesizing, analysing, and conceptualizing qualitative data for the purpose of theory construction. The founders of grounded theory, Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, offered the first explicit, codified statement of how to analyse qualitative data.

Grounded theory is a qualitative method that enables you to study a particular phenomenon or process and discover new theories that are based on the collection and analysis of real-world data.

Unlike traditional hypothesis-deductive approaches of research, where you come up with a hypothesis and then try to prove/disprove it, grounded theory is an inductive approach where new theories are derived from the data.

The process of data collection, data analysis, and theory development happen in an iterative process. Iterative data collection and analysis occurs until you reach theoretical saturation, the point at which additional data adds no additional insight into your new theory.

Fundamentals of Grounded Theory

- ✓ Starting research with a broad research focus or question
- ✓ Delaying literature review until later stages of research
- ✓ Conducting simultaneous data collection and analysis
- ✓ Conducting constant comparison method (generate properties)
- ✓ Keeping memos

Memos, or reflective notes, enable researchers to clarify what they meant or why they created certain codes in their analysis (Bryman, 2012). Through memo writing, GT aims at creating earlier versions of theoretical notions in a more concrete way

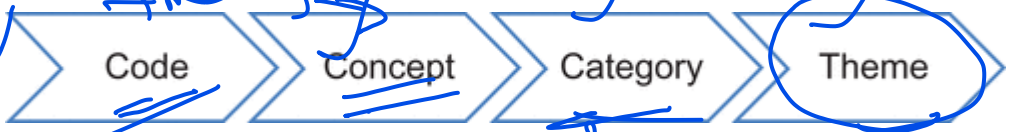
- ✓ Theoretical sensitivity

  Theoretical sensitivity is described as being open to what emerges from the data (Glaser, 1978). This principle also underlines the need for seeing possible connections between the emerging findings and the literature (Urquhart, 2013)

- ✓ Theoretical sampling

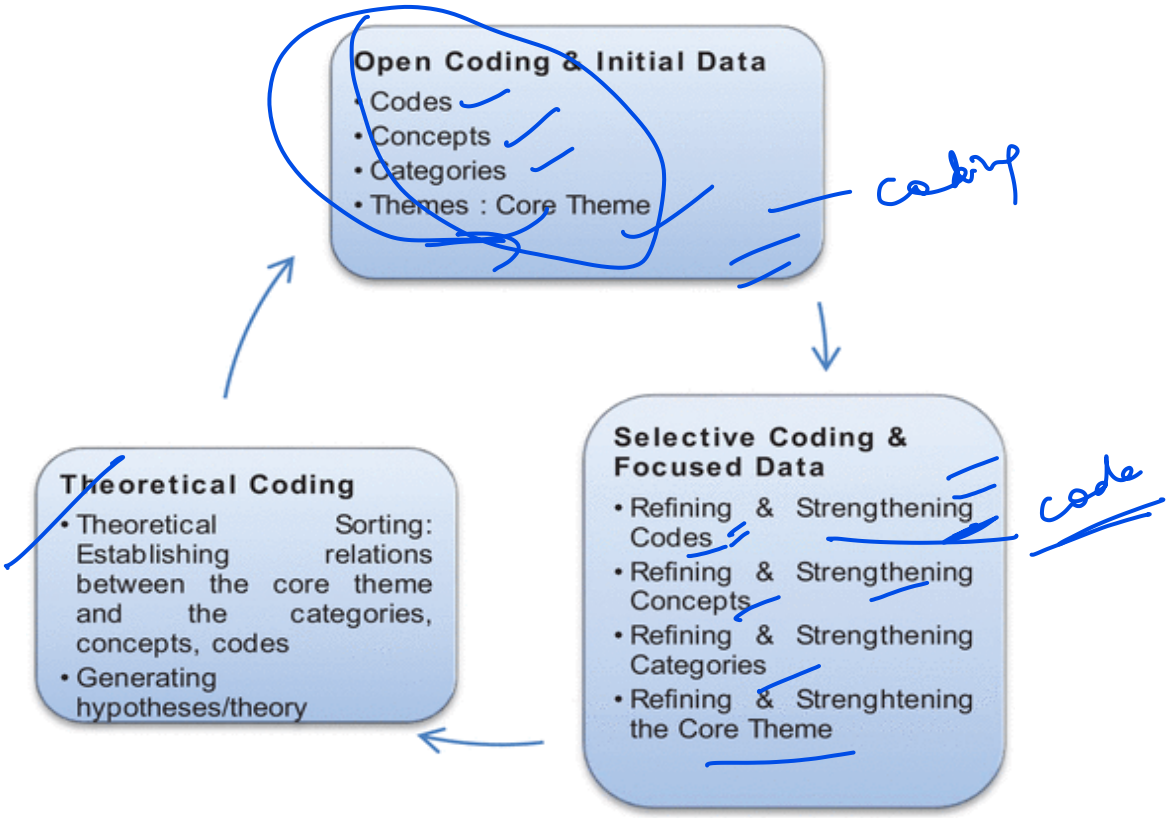
  The final feature of GT is theoretical sampling, highlighting sampling parallel to the theory development rather than representing the population (Charmaz, 2006). This GT principle states that the theory decides where and what to sample (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Any research can adopt different versions of GT

Key Terms in Grounded Theory



In this sequence, code is the first item that emerges. Codes are the labels given to the data extracts depending on what the data extract indicates. Concepts are interpretive words that group the codes sharing the similar ideas. Categories are "higher in level and more abstract than the concept they represent". Comparison and contrast among the concepts generate categories. Categories are the basic guide through which themes, the final step in the coding sequence, are created. Themes are the highest level of abstraction. Codes, concepts, categories, and themes can be created as concise phrases or gerunds.

Example- To describe and theorize Feedback interaction between teachers and students on academic writing


Open Coding & Initial Data
• Codes
• Concepts
• Categories
• Themes : Core Theme
Selective Coding & Focused Data
• Refining & Strengthening Codes
• Refining & Strengthening Concepts
• Refining & Strengthening Categories
• Refining & Strenghtening the Core Theme
Theoretical Coding
• Theoretical Sorting: Establishing relations between the core theme and the categories, concepts, codes
• Generating hypotheses/theory

First Stage of Grounded Theory

1. Generating Codes

Table 1. Generating Codes.

Excerpts	Interview Data Excerpt	Codes (Extract Labels)
Excerpt 1	A: Yes, I think main criteria is its clarity and logical sequences	Perceived criteria for academic writing in target culture
Excerpt 2	And actually we face with different kinds of technique, writing in England	Facing different ways of academic writing in England
Excerpt 3	Because in my country we have a little bit different	Stating the difference of home culture writing
Excerpt 4	In UK's article, you should always write something about wrong side and, advantage and disadvantage, so it's necessary, you can write two main things, I mean two advantage and one disadvantage	Comparison with home culture/ways of writing in the target culture

2. Searching for Concepts

Table 2. Searching for Concepts.

Excerpts	Interview Data Excerpt	Codes (Extract Labels)	Concepts
Excerpt 1	A: Yes, I think main criteria is its clarity and logical sequences	Perceived criteria for academic writing in target culture	Understanding of target discourse
Excerpt 2	And actually we face with different kinds of technique, writing in England	Facing different ways of academic writing in England	
Excerpt 3	Because in my country we have a little bit different	Stating the difference of home culture writing	Awareness of previous context
Excerpt 4	In UK's article, you should always write something about wrong side and, advantage and disadvantage, so it's necessary, you can write two main things, I mean two advantage and one disadvantage	Comparison with home culture/ways of writing in the target culture	Understanding of target discourse

3. Creating Categories

Table 3. Creating Categories.

Excerpts	Interview Data Excerpt	Codes (Extract Labels)	Concepts	Categories
Excerpt 1	A: Yes, I think main criteria is its clarity and logical sequences	Perceived criteria for academic writing in target culture	Understanding of target discourse	Contemplation
Excerpt 2	And actually we face with different kinds of technique, writing in England	Facing different ways of academic writing in England		
Excerpt 3	Because in my country we have a little bit different	Stating the difference of home culture writing	Awareness of previous context	

4. Theme

Table 5. Connecting Categories Under One Theme.

Theme: Critical Awareness of Academic Writing

- Contemplation
  - —Awareness of previous context
  - —Understanding of target discourse
- Proactivity
  - —Developing strategies

Second Stage of Grounded Theory

1. Selective Coding Stage

2. Theoretical Coding stage

3. Theoretical Sorting

4. Generating Hypothesis

4. Focus Group

A focus group is a small group of six to ten people led through an open discussion by a skilled moderator. The group needs to be large enough to generate rich discussion but not so large that some participants are left out.

The moderator's goal is to generate a maximum number of different ideas and opinions from as many different people in the time allotted.

The ideal amount of time to set aside for a focus group is anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. Beyond that most groups are not productive and it becomes an imposition on participant time.

Focus groups are structured around a set of carefully predetermined questions – usually no more than 10 – but the discussion is free-flowing. Ideally, participant comments will stimulate and influence the thinking and sharing of others. Some people even find themselves changing their thoughts and opinions during the group.

It takes more than one focus group on any one topic to produce valid results – usually three or four.

A focus group is not:

- ✓ A debate
- ✓ Group therapy
- ✓ A conflict resolution session
- ✓ A problem-solving session
- ✓ An opportunity to collaborate
- ✓ A promotional opportunity
- ✓ An educational session

There are three types of focus group questions:

1. Engagement questions: introduce participants to and make them comfortable with the topic of discussion
2. Exploration questions: get to the meat of the discussion
3. Exit question: check to see if anything was missed in the discussion

Selecting the Participants

- ➢ In an ideal focus group, all the participants are very comfortable with each other but none of them know each other.
- ➢ Homogeneity is key to maximizing disclosure among focus group participants. Consider the following in establishing selection criteria for individual groups:
- ➢ Gender – Will both men and women feel comfortable discussing the topic in a mixed gender group?
- ➢ Age – How intimidating would it be for a young person to be included in a group of older adults? Or vice versa?
- ➢ Power – Would a teacher be likely to make candid remarks in a group where his/her principal is also a participant?

Focus groups participants can be recruited in any one of a number of ways. Some of the most popular include:

- Nomination – Key individuals nominate people they think would make good participants. Nominees are familiar with the topic, known for their ability to respectfully share their opinions, and willing to volunteer about 2 hours of their time.
- Random selection – If participants will come from a large but defined group (e.g., an entire high school) with many eager participants, names can be randomly drawn from a hat until the desired number of verified participants is achieved.
- All members of the same group – Sometimes an already existing group serves as an ideal pool from which to invite participants (e.g., Kiwanis Club, PTO, Chamber of Commerce).
- Same role/job title – Depending on the topic, the pool might be defined by position, title or condition (e.g., young MBA's, old writers, community health nurses, parents of teen-age boys).
- Volunteers – When selection criteria are broad, participants can be recruited with flyers and newspaper ads.

Analysing the Data

- ✓ In order for all participant comments to be understandable and useful, they must be boiled down to essential information using a systematic and verifiable process.
- ✓ Begin by transcribing all focus group tapes and inserting notes into transcribed material where appropriate.
- ✓ Clean up transcripts by stripping off nonessential words. Simultaneously assign each participant comment/quote a separate line on the page as well as each new thought or idea therein.

- ✓ Label each line with the participant and group number, e.g. a comment from participant 6 in group 2 would be assigned the number 2.6.
- ✓ When all comments have been entered, look for common categories or themes across the entries for each question. The most ideal situation is to ask several people to participate in this process.
- ✓ Once consensus has been achieved regarding the best categories for organizing the data, assign a number or letter to each category.
- ✓ Then assign the number/letter of the category that best fits to each entry on the sheet.
- ✓ Use the Excel 'Sort' function to group entries by the categories you have assigned to them.
- ✓ If some entries seem inconsistent for their category, consider re-categorizing or adding another category.
- ✓ It may also be apparent that one or more categories can be collapsed.
- ✓ Arrange categories from those with the largest number of entries to those with the smallest.
- ✓ Repeat for each group.

6. Case Studies

A case study is an in-depth study of one person, group, or event. In a case study, nearly every aspect of the subject's life and history is analysed to seek patterns and causes of behaviour. Case studies can be used in a variety of fields including psychology, medicine, education, anthropology, political science, and social work.

Types

There are a few different types of case studies that psychologists and other researchers might utilize:

- **Collective case studies**: These involve studying a group of individuals. Researchers might study a group of people in a certain setting or look at an entire community of people.
- **Descriptive case studies**: These involve starting with a descriptive theory. The subjects are then observed and the information gathered is compared to the pre-existing theory.
- **Explanatory case studies**: These are often used to do causal investigations. In other words, researchers are interested in looking at factors that may have actually caused certain things to occur.
- **Instrumental case studies**: These occur when the individual or group allows researchers to understand more than what is initially obvious to observers.
- **Intrinsic case studies**: This type of case study is when the researcher has a personal interest in the case. Jean Piaget's observations of his own children are good examples of how an intrinsic case study can contribute to the development of a psychological theory.

7. Ethnographic Research.

Ethnographic research is qualitative research on a group of people and their behaviours and social interactions within their own, native environment. It involves studying people in context, mainly making observations rather than focusing on hard data and numbers.

- The importance of context
- Fore fronting the point of view of the study's subject(s)
- Detailed documentation of a people and their lives
- Observation done from within a society
- Holistic and qualitative in nature